AMENDMENT
Serial No. 09/196,574

In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

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1. (Twice Amended) An image processing device, comprising:

an input which receives a stereo pair of images;

a foreground extractor coupled to the input which compares location of like pixel information in each image to determine which pixel information is foreground pixel information and which pixel information is background pixel information;

a DCT block classifier coupled to the foreground extractor which determines which DCT blocks of at least one of the images contain a threshold amount of foreground information; and

an encoder coupled to the DCT block classifier which encodes the DCT blocks having the threshold amount of foreground information with a first level of quantization and which encodes the DCT blocks having less than the threshold amount of foreground information as background information at a second lower quantization level, wherein at least a majority of a bandwidth is encoded at the first quantization level.

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4. (Amended) An image processing device, comprising:

an input which receives a stereo pair of images;

a foreground extractor which detects foreground pixel information from the stereo pair of images; and

an encoder coupled to the foreground extractor which encodes the foreground pixel information at a first high level of quantization and which encodes background pixel information at a second lower level of quantization, wherein at least a majority of a bandwidth is encoded at the first high level of quantization.

7. (Amended) An image processing system, comprising:

a stereo pair of cameras for taking a stereo pair of images;

a foreground extractor which detects foreground pixel information from the stereo pair of images; and

an encoder coupled to the foreground extractor which encodes the foreground pixel information at a first high level of quantization and which encodes background pixel information at a second lower level of

quantization; wherein at least a majority of a bandwidth is encoded at the first quantization level.

8. (Amended) A method of encoding a stereo pair of images, comprising:

receiving the stereo pair of images;

extracting foreground information from the stereo pair of images; and

encoding the foreground information at a first higher quantization level and encoding background information of the stereo pair of images at a second lower quantization level; wherein at least a majority of a bandwidth is encoded at the first higher quantization level.

11. (Amended) Computer-executable process steps to process image data from a stereo pair of images, the computer-executable process steps being stored on a computer-readable medium and comprising:

a foreground extracting step to detect foreground pixel information from the stereo pair of images; and

an encoding step for encoding foreground pixel information of at least one image at a first higher

quantization level and for encoding background pixel information of the at least one image at a second lower quantization;

wherein at least a majority of a bandwidth is encoded at the first quantization level.

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14. (Amended) An apparatus for processing a stereo pair of images, the apparatus comprising:

a memory which stores process steps; and

a processor which executes the process steps stored in the memory so as (i) to extract foreground from the stereo pair of images and (ii) to encode the foreground information at a first high level of quantization and to encode background at a second low level of quantization, wherein at least a majority of a bandwidth is encoded at the first quantization level.

REMARKS

Entry of this amendment, as well as the reconsideration and withdrawal of all grounds of rejection are respectfully requested in light of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-16 remain pending herein; claim 1 has been amended to recite that <u>at least a majority of a bandwidth is</u>